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3. — *A Tale of the Huguenots, or Memoirs of a French Refugee Family.* Translated and Compiled from the Original Manuscripts of JAMES FONTAINE, by One of his Descendants. With an Introduction, by F. L. HAWKES, D. D. New York : J. S. Taylor. 1838. 12mo. pp. 266.

WE do not know why this should be called a *tale*, since that word usually designates a fictitious narrative, and it is hardly wise to cast doubt upon the character of a work in the very words of its title. It is not clear too what is meant by its being “translated and compiled”; for the editor, in the Introduction, speaks of but one manuscript, from which he recommended that “extracts” should be made for publication; and we are left to guess whether the printed book contains only the extracts, or the whole original document, and whether or not aid has been derived from other manuscripts. That the existence of this paper or these papers, whichever it be, is not a pretence, like the documents of Diedrich Knickerbocker, or the Wardour manuscript, but a reality, though it might be brought in question by the title of the work, is put beyond doubt by the explicit testimony of the editor, who tells us that he read the original manuscript, which was lent him by the family in which it had been preserved for more than a century. We hope, that it has been printed without alteration.

It is the autobiography of James Fontaine, a Huguenot minister, written by him in his old age, for the information of his children. Its value consists in the picture which it gives of the sufferings endured by that persecuted people; and its interest, in the strange and almost incredible turns of fortune to which its author was subjected. Did we not know that “truth is strange, stranger than fiction,” we should be tempted sometimes to think, that the writer was trying his inventive faculty at the expense of his reader’s credulity. Indeed, so marvellous is the account which he gives of his own adroitness, courage, skill, and success in the most various occupations and the most hazardous emergencies, that we are reminded a little too frequently of the heroic self-complacency of that vainest of story-tellers, Benvenuto Cellini; we are almost led to suspect that the old man has unconsciously exaggerated the remarkable circumstances through which he has passed, and tells them rather as they appear to his own fond memory, than strictly as they were. We should be greatly unjust, however, if we suspected him of intentional exaggeration. Of this there are no signs, but, on the contrary, an air of simplicity and truth runs through the whole; and if we sometimes smile at what seems the self-importance of the narrator, we are checked

by considering that nothing could be more natural or excusable in one who had experienced such wonderful changes and almost miraculous escapes in defending the cause of religion, while he referred every thing to an overruling Providence, and did not allow himself to doubt of a special guidance and protection. If Walter Scott had designed a representation of the times of the Huguenots to mate that of the Covenanters which he drew in "Old Mortality," he would not have ventured on inventions so bold as are some incidents in this book ; and he could not have reached any thing approaching to the vivid picture of simple-hearted faith and real devotion, which this true history displays.

4. — *A New Dictionary of the English Language*. By CHARLES RICHARDSON. In Two Volumes, 4to. London : William Pickering. New York : William Jackson. 1838.

IN a previous number of our Journal, we gave an account of the plan of this work and of its general execution.* From that account it will be readily perceived, that the value of the Dictionary does not consist in its adaptation to popular use. As a dictionary of reference for definitions and illustrations of words, in the existing state of the language, it is inconvenient, and therefore cannot obtain extensive use for that purpose. But it is a curious philological storehouse ; overloaded, indeed, with the antiquities of the English tongue, yet deserving a place in all public libraries, and in the private libraries of critical English readers. We hope the publishers will be amply rewarded for giving us access to this elaborate production, which throws much light on the origin and progressive changes of our copious English vocabulary. The work is now completed upon the plan which we explained sufficiently in our former notice of it, and we do not think it important to add any thing to what has been already said.

The Preliminary Essay and Preface appear in the closing number of the Dictionary, and afford ample matter for those who love to revel in etymological subtilties. Like other lexicographers and grammarians, Mr. Richardson has a theory concerning language, which he explains and defends ; a theory which is ingenious, if not in some respects original. It is founded on the *thesis*, that organic sounds derive their meaning from natural causes. We shall say nothing concerning his illustrations of this, drawn from words of the same meaning in

* See *North American Review*, Vol. XLV. pp. 186, *et seq.*